

9/14/04 Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park Improvements Community Meeting Summary #2

Meeting objective: To end the evening with enough information to be able to develop one preferred plan site plan with phasing options that will be presented at meeting #3 on October 26, 2004.

The 9/14/04 meeting is the second of three community-wide meetings to discuss improvements to MLK Park. **The final meeting to review and comment on a single design will be held on October 26 from 6 to 8 p.m. at 2100 24th Ave S.**

Project Planner Cathy Tuttle described the scope, schedule and budget of the Pro Parks project. She asked that everyone keep the Park Mission Statement in mind when commenting on the park designs.

Scope, schedule and budget. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park was designated as a memorial park for Dr. King in 1983 and in 1984 \$13,000 of Community Development Block Grant money was invested in grading, drainage, and other site improvements. Additional work continued on the park in the 1990s and in 2000 Seattle voters approved the Pro Parks Levy which included \$475,000 to **“improve MLK park including sanctuary seating, pathways, parking, picnic area and landscaping.”** The improvements will be constructed in 2005.

Park Mission Statement. *Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park was conceived as an inspirational memorial to Dr. King. The park is dedicated to teaching each new generation the lessons of Dr. King’s life, and providing a sanctuary to remember his legacy. It serves as a reminder of the force of Dr. King’s spirit, and gives visitors an opportunity to be inspired by his words. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park will awaken awe when seen from a distance and inspiration when experienced from within.*

Adrienne Caver-Hall and Janine Van Sanden are Volunteer Coordinators for Seattle Parks and Recreation. They spoke about how to engage additional community support as well as possible park programs after MLK Park is redeveloped.

Karen Galt and Kim Baldwin, Park Landscape Architects introduced two alternative park design improvement plans and took community comments. These designs are on the park website for community review at: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/mlk.htm>. The Landscape Architects stated three important roles of Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park:

1. **To memorialize Dr. King**
2. **To have a place for special events**
3. **To make the park comfortable for everyday use**

The following reflects the discussion and priorities developed at the September 14 meeting.

DISCUSSION

- **Benches.** Potential use by homeless needs to be balanced with comfortable seating for everyday use. Design for areas within the park where benches could be donated later. Place benches at the top of the hill so that people can enjoy the view. Put benches but not tables in sanctuary area.
- **Picnic area.** Placing picnic tables near the fountain could distract from fountain’s memorial aspect, but a picnic area is important.
- **Pathways and grading.** Make park more accessible. Level out upper view area. Will handrails be installed if there are stairs? (Parks will make any new design accessible.) Many elderly people will use the park.
- **Parking.** Could there be parking on MLK between Walker and McClellan? Need an area where tour buses can park. Group decided parking would NOT take away from memorial feel of park. Some concern around parking being focal point for illicit activity. Would it be possible to increase patrols or put gates to parking area? Can park users park at Amy Yee Tennis Center? (Parks staff will investigate.)

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- **Landscaping.** Is there room for a sensory garden and African plants? Winter flowering plants? (Yes.)
- **Trees.** Include additional trees for shade and beauty. Trees now cut out on traffic noise and make the park a sanctuary. Don't cut trees along MLK Blvd. Put up banners to highlight park.
- **New areas:**
 - Stage.** Place a stage within the fountain so that it does not alter the memorial aspect of the fountain. The stepping stones should not be adjacent to the sculpture to keep people from climbing the fountain sculpture.
 - Bathrooms.** Make sure park users know they can use Amy Yee Tennis Center bathrooms. Provide a place for temporary toilets for big events.
 - Meditation area.** Need an area of peaceful contemplation.
 - Donor plaques and brick pavers.** Donor plaques could move to park entry. Pavers would stay in place.
 - Shelter/picnic area.** More interested in outdoor interpretive center than a picnic shelter. One reason people don't use the park is because there is no shade.
 - Arbor.** Could make a good backdrop for a ceremonial space.
- **Banners and signs.** Let people know the park is here! Make sure signs are put up to keep dogs on leash. Have signs to parking/bathrooms at Amy Yee Tennis Center.
- **Don't forget Dr King was a poet.** Include more of his words and phrases in the park.
- **Address wooded hillside erosion.**

PRIORITIES

Highest Priority:

1. **Lighting.** Uplighting fountain, replacing flood lights with something to enhance the area.
2. **Sidewalks and curbs.** "Finish the park." Parks staff and community will look at other City funding sources to get involved in this project.
3. **Circulation.** Interior paths and stairs to top will help people get around the park.
4. **Stage.** Make a place for special events and performances.
5. **Park Signs.** To Parking at Amy Yee Tennis Center, dogs on leash, etc.
6. **Events.** Make sure parking, port-o-lets, etc. are adequate for larger events.

Medium to High Priority:

1. **Tables, benches.** Should be included in plan for future community fundraising.
2. **Interpretive educational elements.** Art at top of stairs and other locations can wait for future community fundraising.
3. **Banners.** Funded by merchant's association? Need to be durable, maybe metal art banners.
4. **Landscaping.** Trees replaced. Specialized gardens. Memorial areas.

Low Priority:

1. **Entry area.** Redesign entry/arbor to center on fountain. Like arbor if suited to educational/celebration events but may need to delay.
2. **Picnic shelter and BBQ.** Would prefer a structure with an educational function.

Please attend and comment on a final park improvement plan!!!
Community meeting #3 on October 26 from 6-8 p.m at 2100 24th Avenue S.